

- [Home](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Advertising](#)
- [Subscriptions](#)
- [About Us](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

-
-



[Click here to download this weeks entire issue.](#)

Los Angeles, CA

Weather



73°F, Clear

- [News](#)
- [Crime](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Local Columnists](#)
- [Special Section »](#)
- [Travel](#)

SEARCH

Featured, News

City council salutes a 'legend' in politics

By Aaron Blevins, 6/19/2014

Congressman Waxman is hailed as a visionary

Like

1

Tweet

0

g+1

0



The Los Angeles City Council proclaimed last Friday as “Henry Waxman Day in L.A.” and invited the retiring

U.S. Congressman to city hall, where officials praised his 40-year career in politics.



Members of the city council and City Attorney Mike Feuer presented Congressman Henry Waxman with a proclamation for his service.
(photo by Aaron Blevins)

Organized by Councilmen Mike Bonin, 11th District, and Paul Koretz, 5th District, the event served as an opportunity to honor “one of the truly great figures of modern politics and governments,” Koretz said.

“I wanted to ask him here not only for his benefit, but for ours, because Henry Waxman was, is and will always be a great source of inspiration, a paradigm of great leadership,” he added. “We can always learn from his shining example.”

Koretz said Waxman has always been a champion for a diversity of crucial causes, and has produced a vast array of landmark legislation that tackled some of the country’s most pressing issues, such as climate change, economic justice, human rights, global democracy and security, public health and wellbeing, HIV/AIDS, second-hand smoke and more.

“Henry has been a fearless champion who’s changed the world for the better,” Koretz said. He recognized the members of the Congressman’s staff who were in attendance, as well as friends, family members and Waxman’s wife, Janet.

Koretz recalled his campaign for state Assembly 14 years ago, when the LA Weekly endorsed him and stated that he was notable because of his Waxman-esque lack of charisma.

“When I say that, I thought, ‘That’s not fair. Henry has charisma,’” he said, adding that Waxman is a sweet, down-to-earth guy who has become the most successful member of Congress in his lifetime.

Bonin referred to Waxman as a friend and mentor, and said he paid homage to the congressman by wearing a necktie — an unusual occurrence.

“I’m wearing one today because, for me, today is a very special occasion, because we are saluting a giant,” Bonin said, adding that Waxman has made Los Angeles a better place to live.

He said it is difficult to talk about the congressman, as even the most simple facts are so impressive and sound like exaggerations. Bonin said Waxman has left an “indelible, undeniable, monumental” impact on the lives of

Angelenos.

“He has been one of the most important and influential members of Congress in our lifetime,” he added.

Bonin noted Waxman’s work on [universal insurance](#), tobacco regulations, AIDS research, pesticides, [nursing home](#) quality standards and affordable [prescription drugs](#), among other topics.

“There has not been a more fierce advocate for the things that matter to our quality of lives and what matters to neighborhoods in Los Angeles than Henry Waxman,” he added.

Bonin, who is gay, seemed especially thankful for Waxman’s work on AIDS. In 1991, no one cared about the afflicted, but before the term AIDS was ever coined, Waxman held a hearing on the disease.

“At a time when people were calling for quarantines, Henry was calling for public education,” he said. “It was an act of uncommon courage. It was an act of incredible foresight. ... We are so blessed and so fortunate to have someone who stood up and cared about everyone and who has made lives better across this city, across the country.”

Councilman Bob Blumenfield, 3rd District, met Waxman 23 years ago, when Blumenfield was working for former U.S. Rep. Howard Berman. That was when Waxman was working on the Ryan White Care Act.

“Together, the two of them had forged a reputation as two of the most effective legislators ever to serve,” Blumenfield said, adding that Waxman was already considered a legend at the time. “Few if any legislators have had so forceful an impact on so broad a cross-section of issues that affect America.”

He said Waxman has had a “profound” impact on the American political landscape, and he has made it look easy. However, Blumenfield said the congressman was not afraid to throw elbows when necessary.

“He pushes for what is right. He doesn’t compromise on his principles,” he said. “Thank you so much. We’re going to miss you in the halls of Congress, and we welcome you to spend more time in L.A. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

City Attorney Mike Feuer said “Henry Waxman Day in L.A.” was a “melancholy moment” for city officials. He said he first heard of the congressman from his grandmother, who was proud to advocate for Waxman when his political career began.

“She had a sense of what Henry Waxman would become,” Feuer said.

He met him personally in 1986, when Feuer was the director of Bet Tzedek Legal Services. From that point forward, Feuer had an opportunity to witness what made Waxman a legend.

“There will be no one who can replace him,” he said, referencing the ongoing election to succeed him in the 33rd Congressional District. Feuer said Waxman took office in order to stand for something and accomplish as much as possible — whereas some politicians take office to be important. “That’s why he has been so respected in so many circles, public and private alike. ... It’s going to be very difficult for us to find that next go-to representative.”

The city attorney said Waxman is not only a leader of great principle, integrity and effectiveness, he is a person

whose values are the envy of new politicians.

“What an honor it’s been to even stand with him, to work with him,” Feuer said. “He and Janet are wonderful people. I wish them very well in Henry’s next phase of his career.”

Council President Herb Wesson, 10th District, had a simple message for the congressman.

“When Mike Bonin says to you that he’s wearing a tie in your honor to pay your respect, in all the years that I’ve known him, this is only the third time that I’ve seen him with a tie. So he’s really serious,” he said, evoking laughter.

Councilman Tom LaBonge, 4th District, praised Waxman and his staff, who have accomplished “great” things together. He advised the congressman to enjoy his life after politics, but challenged him to finish strong.

“I want you to have a good fourth quarter. ... We’re going to miss you in Congress big-time, but life is very precious,” LaBonge said, thanking Waxman on behalf of his constituents.

Councilman Gil Cedillo, 1st District, also expressed gratitude. Years ago, he traveled to Washington, D.C., to testify in front of Waxman’s committee for the Service Employees International Union. Cedillo said he was so excited that he arrived three hours early and went to the wrong hearing. He did testify, however.

“You were nothing but a gentleman,” Cedillo said. “You were very kind, you were very helpful and you were very supportive. It was reflective of your entire tenure. That’s why you were so successful.”

Waxman said he was honored to have the city pay tribute to him — especially while he was still alive. He thanked all of the speakers, as well as his family, friends and staff. Waxman said he’s been through several redistricting processes, and the one constant was that he represented Los Angeles.

“I’ve always represented L.A., and L.A. has always meant an enormous amount to me,” he said, adding that he did not expect to move further west during the last redistricting process. “It was a very, very exciting district to represent in these last few years. ... I may not be in Congress after the end of the year, but I’m still going to be involved.”

The retiring congressman’s final term ends in December.

Like

1

Tweet

0

g+1

0

p

+

Tags | [Congressman Henry Waxman](#) [Henry Waxman Day](#) [Los Angeles City Council](#)

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)